

**THE POSITIONING OF TEACHERS' IDENTITY
AS ORAL EXAMINERS IN NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION**

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KUALA LUMPUR

2018

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF LINGUISTICS

FACULTY OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR

2018

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
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Name of Degree: Master of Linguistics

Title of Project Paper/Research Report/Dissertation/Thesis: The Positioning of
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Field of Study: Discourse Analysis

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THE POSITIONING OF TEACHERS' IDENTITY AS ORAL EXAMINERS IN NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION

ABSTRACT

Research on educator's identity has been a main area of interest since the 1990s. Over the years, a number of researchers have looked into other aspects of educators' identity, with focus on their major job roles. However, few have examined the role of educators as assessors. Hence, this present study aims to look at how fourteen teachers in a local public institution of higher education identify themselves as oral assessors, as well as how they position themselves with this role. Soreide's (2006) theory is employed as the main theoretical framework of this study. Findings from the data obtained through a set of interviews with fourteen educators reveal that a comprised collection of twenty subject positions was found, with five main clusters of multiple assessor identity categorised. Further, an analysis of how the educators position themselves as oral assessors was also carried out. It appears that for the most times, the educators do associate themselves with the said identity, using the narrative resources available.

POSISI IDENTITI PENDIDIK SEBAGAI SEORANG PENILAI LISAN DALAM PEMBINAAN NARATIF

ABSTRAK

Penyelidikan mengenai identiti pendidik telah lama menjadi satu subjek menarik sejak tahun 1990-an. Walau bagaimanapun, ramai pengkaji hanya mengkaji aspek-aspek peribadi seorang pendidik. Tumpuan pula kurang diberikan kepada salah satu aspek tugas utama seorang pendidik, iaitu sebagai seorang penilai. Disebabkan itu, kajian ini telah dijalankan dengan objektif untuk mengkaji bagaimana empat belas guru di sebuah institusi pengajian awam tinggi tempatan mengaitkan diri mereka secara khusus sebagai seorang penilai lisan. Pada masa yang sama, kajian ini juga ingin melihat bagaimana guru-guru ini meletakkan identiti mereka dengannya. Teori Soreide (2006) telah digunakan sebagai rangka kajian ini. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa terdapat dua puluh jenis kedudukan subjek yang diutarakan oleh para guru ini. Lima kelompok utama identiti penilai juga turut dikenal pasti. Langkah seterusnya melibatkan analisis bagaimana pendidik meletakkan diri mereka menggunakan kedudukan subjek yang telah diutarakan sebelumnya. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa pada kebanyakan masa, para pendidik ini mengaitkan diri mereka dengan identiti yang disebut.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My **utmost gratitude** to the following people:

My parents; for the love, support and unending prayers;

Dr. Teoh; for the guided supervision, words of wisdom and for just being

“Dr. Teoh”;

Dr. Tam and team; for allowing me to use the data collected for this study;

and lastly,

My friends; for the unending encouragement and motivation.

This work would not have been possible without you.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide a brief introduction to the current research, and it begins with the background of the study. This is a study that examines the identities portrayed by assessors (who are teachers of English) as an individual and collectively as a group. An overview to the study's objective and its research questions will also be provided in this chapter, followed by the problem statement, significance, the scope and limitations.

1.2 Background of the Study

In every one interaction that a person makes with another individual, 'stories' are often told about themselves. This usually ranges from details of our everyday living to our experiences in certain things, our main interests and such. Situations as mentioned are example of instances where individuals share life histories, or better referred to as ontological narratives in which they are described to be as when "[e]verything we know is the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves" (Sommers and Gibson, 1994, p. 41) These are the kinds of public and personal narratives which we assign ourselves to and at the same time, guides our behaviour (Baker, 2005). Hence the current study examines the ontological narration of fourteen teachers from a local public higher education institution, with particular focus on the concepts of 'identity' and 'positioning' as the two main subjects of interest.

Research on identity has long been a main area of interest. However, understanding the concept may prove to be difficult due to the many factors that come into place. Many studies have attempted to provide a solid definition for this term, with various views on this. For example, Gee (2001, p.100) defined identity as one's need "to be recognized as a

certain kind of person by others” while Sfard and Prusak (2005, p.16), defined it as “a collection of stories about persons, or more specifically, those narratives about individuals that are reifying, endorsable, and significant”. This two definitions are just some of the examples exhibiting the multiple meaning to this concept. In line to this, this study will be adapting Sfard and Prusak’s (2005) definition of identity as the main baseline since it adheres more to the current study’s aim.

One of the ways on how identity is socially constructed for educators is through public discourse and linguistic constructions which may either be in written or spoken form. Similar to the many different roles we individuals take on in our lives, it appears that the sample population in this study also portray various roles as culled from the data. Generally educators do take on various identities in their careers, and it is not easy to juggle these various roles in their teaching journey. Besides having to negotiate their teacher identities alongside different existing identities such as learners and mothers (Zacharias, 2010), they are also expected to balance the process of change, which is constantly occurring. Balancing both the professional and personal identities may not seem easy, but inevitably it is one of the most important core processes to the development of an effective teacher (Alsup, 2006).

Teacher identity is considered to be complex, shifting according to many different factors. Some of the factors involved range from emotion (Zembylas, 2003) to experiences from occurrences in the workplace and in their daily life (Flores & Day, 2006; Sachs, 2005). In a few earlier studies conducted by Harden and Crosby, (2000), it was found that a teacher would adopt six different roles which includes being ‘the information provider’, ‘the role model’, ‘the facilitator’, ‘the planner’, and ‘the resource developer’ according to circumstances. In the current study the role of the teacher as ‘the assessor’ will be highlighted. Such a role, that is of an assessor, requires a different set of skills and knowledge. Assessing students’ progress and competence may not be an easy task, and

educators who may consider themselves as experts in teaching may not necessarily be competent assessors as it requires skills that may need further training. This has been one of the motivational factors as to why the study examines the role of the teacher as an assessor.

Having explained how identities of the educators have been located, it appears that these identities are usually perceived by society and not many studies have looked at how the educators perceive themselves as assessors. However, over time, various studies have revealed that the roles of teachers within the education field have become more varied. From examining teacher's attitudes on their work and working conditions in the 1970s, the field gradually expanded into studying teachers' own perspectives and understanding of teaching and learning (Ziechner, 1992). Then it focused on teachers' reflection, practices and knowledge, and eventually this led to also studies on identity. It was found that a number of extensive studies conducted over the recent years explored newer perspectives, with particular focus on teacher's narrative identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Canrinus, 2011; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Søreide (2007). It does appear that studies on how educators take on their role as assessors have been done (Nijveldt et. al, 2009). However, this has proven to be limited.

This study therefore aimed to show how a community of practice which consists of a group of language teachers in a local institution enacted their identities through their narrative construction. The fact that mutual engagement exists within the academic staff of a department in the institution, teaching students the "disciplinary content knowledge and acculturating them into the ways of thinking, talking and writing in the discipline" (Wenger, 1998, p. 73) leads to the term "community of practice". At the same time, these educators share the same practice in line with the theme of assessing, which is the main focus of this study.

In order to identify the identities portrayed by a teacher, a study was conducted by interviewing 14 educators. The interview comprised of only 4 main questions and 3

resource persons were briefed on how to do the interviews. The interview was recorded and subsequently transcribed. Finally the transcribed scripts were analysed thoroughly and subject positions were identified. The amount of data collected was able to yield interesting findings to understand the teachers' identity and how they position themselves as oral assessors when being put into the situation. In the institution, these language teachers are responsible for teaching proficiency and skill-based programmes to their undergraduates.

Through the identification of identities from the sample, positioning comes into role in the second part of the analysis. According to Davies and Harré (1999, p. 37), positioning is defined as "the discursive process whereby people are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines." It is a concept which started out in the field of psychology, and over the years have made a shift into discourse analysis. The actual basis of this theory consists of a tri-polar relationship, which involves positioning, a storyline and the social force of speech acts. When human beings converse with one another, we tend to take on specific role as the conversation continues, and this ranges from being a listener to the speaker and such. However, not all roles are maintained. They change and can change a variety of times to adapt to the situation at that time.

The main aim of this theory is to make a connection and to create an understanding between psychological phenomena and discourse. Specifically, a person can be positioned through two methods, which is either through 'interactive positioning' or through 'reflexive positioning'. This is when participants of the conversation position themselves or are positioned in different conversational locations according to changes in storylines" (Yamakawa, Forman & Ansell, 2005, p. 180). By adapting to this theory, the concept of identity can better be understood through how both social and psychological phenomena manifest themselves in discourse.

Harré & Van Langenhove (1999) proposed, through this case study, useful

information which includes the following:

- (i) their interactions in terms of discursive positions that they take up,
- (ii) what they do with their talk; and
- (iii) storylines which develop during interactions

All of the stated contributes to the constitutive elements of conversations (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999), which can be seen through the interviews in the compiled list of data. From the concepts discussed briefly above, the researcher hopes to gain a better insight through this study, with the hopes of being able to answer the research questions posed.

1.3 Statement of Problem

To date, many studies have focused on the outlook of researching teachers' identity traditionally. Studies done usually look into different aspects of identities and positioning (Fariza Khalid, 2015; Andreouli, 2010; Swennen, Volman & Essen, 2008; Lentz, 2007; Barrett, 2005; Yamakawa, Forman & Ansel, 2005; Phoenix, Frosh & Pattman, 2003). Few have looked into teachers' personal perspective and how teachers identify themselves as educators from their point of view. It would be interesting to see how teachers identify and position themselves as oral assessors. Not only that, it is from this study too that the teachers can have an idea of their teaching practices as well as their teacher-ship. This fresh outlook from a different aspect can provide useful information which may fill in certain gaps in this specific area, both on a micro and macro level.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe the identities portrayed by the assessors as an individual and collectively as a group. It is also to ascertain whether certain identities are more or less common to the teachers here in the institution. At the same time, it seeks to gain insights into how these identities, constructed narratively by these fourteen teachers, can be understood.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are the identities portrayed by the teachers as oral assessors?
 - as an individual
 - as a group
- 2) How are these assessors' identities narratively constructed and understood?

For the first research question, the identities portrayed as a group will be supported using simple statistical data. However, the main method for both the questions above will be answered using qualitative evaluation taken from the extracts found in the transcripts.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This present study attempts to identify the identities and how the fourteen teachers involved in this study here in Malaysia position themselves with it. It looks specifically into how they identify themselves as oral assessors throughout their years of experiences. The findings from this study will contribute to a better understanding of how narrative identities

can be constantly shaped and adapted over the coming years. Not only that, a better understanding of the teachers as oral assessors can be obtained, in which improvements can be done in the institution, the policy and in the relevant areas pertaining to their personal growth as educators. At the same time, on a bigger scale, the researcher hopes that the findings found may also fill in the necessary research gaps, be it theoretical wise or from another different aspect. Considering that this research is looking from a different aspect of identity and narratives, the researcher too hopes that this study will be able to provide a platform for more similar researches to be conducted in the near future.

1.7 Scope and Limitations

The research is only limited to a group of teachers from one public institution of higher education. As such, the findings are only applicable to this group of people who were part of the sample study. Although looking at a smaller sampling of data is found to be more detailed and focused, however, the results found will not be representative of the identity patterns found in the teachers here in the institution itself. It can be said that findings from this initial investigation may lead to bigger ones which can be done when a study with a bigger population is conducted in the near future.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses in detail of the theories and frameworks adopted in the current study. The first section of this chapter will focus on the central concepts of this study, which includes *narratives*, *identity*, *positioning* and *assessment*. The later section will focus on the theoretical framework used in this study, prior to the methodology of the analysis which will be further explained in Chapter 3. Relevant previous studies are also discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Narratives

Using narratives as a method of research is an interesting way in which people share things about themselves, simultaneously making effort in interpreting current incidences or future undertakings. This is in an effort to know about one another, where lived experiences are shared, usually revolving around the things we like to do, our main interests, and such. According to Teichert (2004), previous occurrences, expectations of the future, actions and experiences are elements which explain what narratives are. In a narrative, the presence of storyteller is compulsory, positioning their stories and themselves differently according to situations and given conditions. Through the process of positioning, a link is being created within the told past experiences, the narratives, the action and the storyteller's self-identity. (Ricouer, 1992; Somers and Gibson, 1994). This happens because each narrated story will always be told from "a specific place, to a specific audience, in a specific setting with a specific intention" (Søreide, 2007, p. 28). Hence, narrations can never be said to be neutral. Somers and Gibson agreed to this notion when they mentioned that "[e]verything we know is the result of numerous crosscutting story-lines in which social actors locate themselves"

(Somers & Gibson 1994, p.41). Hence the richness of narratives as a means to understand lived experiences may be used to exploit roles and identities in any community.

2.2.1 Characteristics and the Types of Narratives

Narratives have always been a subject of interest in the world of research since the early 20th century due to its flexible nature of being applicable in most areas of research interest. It has been used as a common method to understand individuals and their lived experiences more deeply. More extensive recent researches are still applying this approach in order to further analyse and understand the human experience better. (Jordal and Heggen, 2015; Mura, 2015; Honkasilta et.al, 2016; West et. al, 2016). Labov (2006) provided a list of specific criteria to distinguish narratives from other discourses, citing that narratives should be temporal in nature, reflecting significant qualities both before and after. Narratives should also only occur when an individual is triggered either internally or externally to tell someone about something. Thirdly, narratives are always conversational in nature, and are recursive in being where the constant need to provide information beforehand and explanation is needed. Finally, a narrative should consist of a series of events (Wilkens et. al, 2003). Discourses obtained from in-depth interviews from individuals or focus groups when deliberating on certain issues may be used to draw out their stance, identity, values, attitudes and perceptions. Such information is rich and contains depth for analysis and the current study examines in particular the identity of a group of individuals as they were interviewed on their roles as educators.

To investigate identity, these three dimensions were proposed by Somers and Gibson (1994). They are:

- *Ontological Narrative* – These are the type of stories we project in the means of telling others how we have lived through our experiences and the need to be understood. In general, people draw on this type of narratives in order to bring certain people into being, and at the same time, shaping identities and selves. In nature, ontological narratives are interpersonal and social.
- *Public narratives* – This refers to the narratives about a group of people whose stories are being told by mediums such as the media, documents, researchers and such. This usually includes stories pertaining to aspects larger than an individual, such as social and institutional forms of religion, political and such of that kind. These types of narratives can either be local, national or global.
- *Meta narratives* – Narratives of this type refers to the grand stories of a conversation, characterised by both temporal and physical scale with a touch of inescapability. These narratives can easily acquire the status of super narratives, with the ability to impact the world and the lives of the society in every existing division. In short, meta narratives have effects on the world on a bigger scale.

This study focuses on ontological narratives due its flexible nature as concurred by Labov (2006) who argues that it will help to create a strong platform, allowing for deeper exploration into the data in order to gain a better insight and understanding of the possible identities captured through the narratives of the educators. Through the collection of the various real-life situations taken from an authentic personal account, the true essence of the study can be purposefully achieved. These set of narratives can mark the emergence of new identities which may possibly lead to the creation of another list of identities.

2.2.2 Narratives: Previous Studies

Using narratives as an approach to examine data has been used in various studies. One of them, Mura (2015) utilises this method in a study on tourism. He examined the authenticity of a Malaysian homestay experience by looking into various internet blogs and interviews conducted online. The main aim of his study was to look at whether the experience of living in a Malaysian homestay is perceived as authentic by the sample population. Using the interpretivist frame of inquiry, he found that the experience is authentic up to a certain degree. Through the narratives analysed, it was also found that the “authenticity” of each experience is only for a short while as guests were not usually interested to compromise their everyday comforts in such exchange.

In the same field, Bosangit, McCabe and Hibbert (2009) conducted narrative analysis on travel blogs in order to explore and understand how orders from tourists are constructed (in the context of tourist behaviour) and how meanings are made from the shared experiences. Looking into the three most visited travel blogs online, the results of this study found that tourists’ identity can be identified from the stories told, especially from the way they were retold. It was also found that these aspects were

linked to features such as skills, the relations built, values and choices made, creating significant meaning to the experience.

The narrative analysis method is also employed in the medical field. Jordal and Heggen (2015) explored narratives on male students about their views on care and the stigma they are put up against in the nursing profession. This became a subject of interest when the literature reviewed showed a lack of study in this area. Norwegian male nurse students studying in their first year were selected and interviews were conducted. Findings of the study reported that storytelling shows a different method as to how males fit and negotiate themselves in a profession dominated by females. It was also proposed that these stories can be adapted as a teaching and learning strategy for the betterment of future students and the study field itself.

Another similar study was conducted by West et.al (2016) who examined the success rate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nursing students' in completing the course they were enrolled in. Simultaneously, West et. al aimed to compile these storylines in order to build on a new collection of student narratives in this field. A total of eight final year nursing students volunteered, and interviews sessions conducted in a semi-structured manner were carried out. Using the same method of analysis, this study found four key success factors which had a role in the success rates of these students. The four key success factors were resilience, having good supportive connections, institutional support from related agencies as well as a good positive outlook for their future expectations.

Further, narrative analysis is also a commonly used method in the field of education. Honkasilta et.al (2016) analysed thirteen narratives of ADHD-diagnosed Finnish students in order to explore into their teachers' reactive classroom management strategies. The paper explored classroom management from the viewpoint of the ADHD

students. Five narrative types were identified from the data collected, which included 'disproportionate', 'traumatising', 'neglectful', 'unfair' and 'understanding'. The study reflected negative evaluations of the teachers through the narrative analysed. Although initially thought to be a factor, it was also found that ADHD did not have a significant impact on the students' narratives.

Another interesting study by Özyıldırım (2009) on the oral and written strategies with a group of sixty Turkish university students examined their personal experience narratives. Using Labov's (1972) narrative categories, both written and oral forms of their personal experience were analysed. The analysis was done in two different parts, in which the results yielded showed that there were distinct differences between the two forms. However, despite the differences, the personal narratives collected did reveal similar organizational patterns.

These studies mentioned demonstrated the use of narrative analysis in various fields. There appears to be several extensive studies conducted in the fields mentioned above, especially in the areas of personal development, (Özyıldırım, 2009) tourism (Mura, 2015; Bosangit, McCabe & Hibbert, 2009), education (Honkasilta et.al, 2016) and the medical field (Jordal & Heggen, 2015; West et.al, 2016). However, it is noted studies which identify roles of educators as assessors are scarce. This motivated the current study and it is hoped that through the study of narratives, this research will be able to delve deeper into the understanding of educators and their roles as assessors, in particular on group oral interaction tests. It is important for these educators' narratives to be contextualised too, so as to allow a strong anchor in the diverse life of assessing. These narratives not only will prove to be beneficial for the researcher, but also for the agencies involved in the area of education.

2.3 Identity

Identity is an integral component of being an individual, where experience, attitude and character are some of the factors which constitute of one's identity. The section below explains the several different notions of 'identity' alongside 'job identity'.

a) Identity Theory (role based)

Role based identity theory is defined as the role that a person creates for their individual self when placed in a particular social position (McCall and Simmons, 1978). Later on, it was further defined as when an individual takes on the prospects and expectations related to the given role and actions when working together with other existing roles in the circle (Thoits & Virshup, 1997). Role based identity which emerge from the interaction can remain and are preserved alongside the particular role in a structured society with its meanings and expectations. In every interaction, it is undeniable that a set of roles will be activated. However, the theory argues that the connotations and expectations will be different across the individuals in the roles (Stets and Burke, 2000).

b) Social Identity Theory (group based)

This theory puts forward the idea that the feeling of belonging and attachment will be present for every individual participating in a social interaction of a group of community. Two clear processes are identified in this theory and they are self-categorisation and social comparison. Self-categorisation can be identified as an accentuation of the perceived similarities between the self and other in-group members, and an accentuation of the perceived differences between the self and out- group

members” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 225). Social comparison, on the other hand, is defined as “the selective application of the accentuation effect, primarily to those dimensions that will result in self- enhancing outcomes” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p.225). In this particular identity, the elements of cognitive, attitude and behaviour are all being shared by the said individuals.

c) Person Identity

Both theories explained above constitute to this next theory which is identified as person identity theory, and there is a social aspect which takes into account the unique and distinct self-categorisation from others. This is evident when an individual acts on his or her own to achieve their own goals, instead of collectively as group (Stets and Burke, 2000). From a role based point of view, person identity can be defined as “various roles the self takes up and various situations it is in” (Zainon binti Shamsudin, 2010, p.18).

The classifications of identity provided above show that identities exist as main elements in both the social and individual self-structure. It serves to affirm in many different contexts, the constant ongoing process of individuals changing behaviour to suit different situations, as a means to maintain their performance which will be appraised and are congruent to their identity standards. This process is one which will involve self-adjustment, and will never be static. From this, it can be concluded that identities are elements which are constantly crafted and modified, with particular courses of action followed depending on how people are located and how they locate themselves.

1) Job-Identity of an Educator

Job-identity is the central focus of this study and the career of persons as educators is significant because educators hold multiple roles in a job. Hence, in relation to this study, the aim of this research is to look into the types of identities these educators enact in their institution. Two main approaches are central to this concept: the essentialist and the constructivist approach. When an individual is deemed to be an identical individual in both himself and when in different roles, he is adopting the essentialist approach. This refers very much to a segregation of the private and professional life of an educator, which do not intertwine in any way. Throughout the process, an educator may develop a core identity and different roles in his or her career. These roles may have a positive or a negative impact on the core identity of the educator, but never integrated together into the build-up of the educator's identity.

Unlike the essentialist, the constructivist approach is when individuals take the opportunity to "continually negotiate their identity in order to balance the actions they consider normal and reasonable, what they do and what they wish to do." (Søreide, 2007, p.24). Identity is created through our engagement with our surroundings, and not something that we can find and develop as it is based on the understanding that people enact their identities via relationships, choices, practices and language (Calhoun, 1994; Weedon, 1997) This approach is functional when individuals find ways to combine their core identity and the different roles he or she carry in life in order to identify themselves with a concrete job-identity.

Having explained the two approaches, it is noted that the current study has adopted the second perspective. Often, the essentialist approach is considered to be stable and unchangeable, hence, limiting our views to the factors affecting the creation of an educator's identity. Through this, it is hoped that the educators can build on a solid

identity through the action of weaving together different elements and functioning roles from their personal and professional lives. By using the constructivist approach, this will enable the educators to enhance their job identity, resulting in efficiency and competency within the workplace itself. What matters most is the constant process of negotiation leading to the solid structure of these educators' identities, and not whether if certain roles help to contribute to the development of their job-identities.

2) Educators and Communities of Practice

A community of practice is a social organization where learning and participation occur. The definition was further expanded by Wenger and Wenger-Trayner (2015) by stating that the same concern or passion is shared and worked upon together during the process of interaction. These are actually groups with specific purpose and meaning working around together in completing authentic tasks. (Parker et.al, 2010)

As an educator, one is routinely involved in this circle. This is an important ongoing notion existing in the life of an educator as they share many common aspects together. Similarly, educators when in their role as oral assessors too share a common ground. It is believed that the results of this study will showcase many of the values and practices these educators share together. More significantly, insights on how these oral assessors engage in similar ideas can provide an understanding of the grounds and beliefs contributing to the make-up of a good oral assessor.

3) Teachers' Identities: Previous Studies

Over the years, studies have been done on the general field of identity, as well as specifically looking into teacher's identity. Relevant to the field of education is a study conducted by Zacharias (2010). The study looked into the use of narrative analysis to further understand the complex build of teaching identity construction. In-depth interviews, focus groups and the analysis of several related documents were conducted with relevant individuals and materials. Using Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber's (1998) as the analytical framework of the study, it was found that the twelve participants experienced shifts in their identities, in which it was believed that the teacher education programs conducted at the point in time was a site for identity reconstruction and reflection.

Another study was done with the aims of looking into the comparison of Tanzanian and English primary school teachers. Barrett (2005) focused on occupational identity, looking into insights of both groups. Interviews, discussion groups, academic literature, intensive observations and extended conversations were some of the methods used by the researcher to collect the needed data. Guided by Bernstein's competence and performance pedagogic modes as well as Osborn, Boradfoot & McNess "Extension to Professionalism", it was found that the performance mode was dominant in Tanzania. There were instances where the competence mode would also be visible, an element which was found to be different from England's.

Swennen, Volman and Essen (2008) conducted a study where they examined the biographies of two out of five teachers (specifically the two youngest), in order to gain insight of how their dynamic personal professional identity is developed. The interview was transcribed and it was found that over the years, things have changed and this has impacted the built of identity for the two teachers, in which they have used to contribute

to the larger development of the society.

Søreide (2007) studied how certain public policy texts revolving around teacher education and elementary school construct teacher identities. A total of three public school policy and curriculum documents were analysed and the results showed that in these documents, a certain construction of teacher identity has already been suggested. However, with reference to the Norwegian situation, it was found that the teachers identify themselves as being more 'moral flavour' with strong values in justice and equality in comparison to the ones proposed. Adaptive learning was given extra emphasis, giving more prominence to this identity feature.

Further, Vähäsantanen et. al. (2008) looked into the aim of investigating teacher's professional identity negotiation in three different contexts - the work organisation, the professional community and individual agency. The study took into account the experiences of 24 Finnish teachers from two educational institutions in an interview session conducted from the year 2005 to 2006. The results from this study yielded that stronger social organisations place more restrictions on the different opportunities and that teachers were more committed to working with the company if it is able to provide a safe ground.

The studies mentioned above merely analysed a few components of teacher identity (Søreide, 2007; Zacharias, 2010), teacher's professional identity (Swennen, Volman & Essen, 2008; Vähäsantanen, 2008), as well as job identity (Barrett, 2005). They seem to suggest that the study of identity and teacher's identity has been ongoing for quite some time, with many conducted by researchers in other countries. The number of studies revolving around the three concepts has increased successfully with more gaining interest in this area. However, only few explored the identity of an educator as an oral assessor. One common factor these findings share appears to be that

change is a constant in identity. The changes which occur are very context dependent, and it seems to impact every individual differently. The findings could be similar for the research conducted on oral assessors.

2.3.4 Teacher Identity in the Malaysian Context

Research in the Malaysian context in this area has brought about different results. In a preliminary study done by Hazri Jamil, Yusof Petras and Abdul Rashid Mohamed (2013), it was found that most Malaysian teachers' identity are rather individual than collective. The aim of the study was to obtain evidence in regards to Malaysian teachers identity, their stories about the school in which they are working in, as well as the teaching and policy practice pertaining to a teachers' professional identity. Data was collected since 2011 from a total of 467 primary and secondary school teachers residing in the country. The primary instrument used in order to collect data was through survey forms. Through the study, it was found that the experiences and the ideas of the subject population do bring about a great impact on the quality and effectiveness of their teaching.

In another research by Fariza Khalid (2015) the results obtained from the research showed that there were four main dimensions of teacher's identity. The research was carried out in order to examine the nature of teachers' dimensions of identities and how these dimensions interconnected to each other in determining teachers' effectiveness. Twenty junior and senior secondary school teachers were part of the sample population. Data was extracted through one-to-one interviews, using thematic analysis as its foreground. The study also explained how the found identities impacted the effectiveness of the teachers.

Huzaina Abd Halim and Nurul Sakinah Abd Razak (2016) in their study examined the adaptation of the Malaysian education pedagogical principles and its impact on the renegotiation of the teacher's identities. Applying the framework of social theory of learning by Wenger (1998), the study focused on two teachers. Data was obtained through two methods, one using semi-structured interviews and another, using a video stimulated interview. Results from this study shows that the adaptation does have an impact on the renegotiation of both the teachers' identities.

As reviewed above, there have been very limited studies on identities of an educator as oral assessors. Many have chosen to highlight different aspects of identity with focus on different groups of sample population. The study attempts to examine the identities of oral assessors, and offers a different perspective of educators. It is hoped that feedback obtained may be used for future action, which could include major changes institutionally in assessment practices.

2.4 Positioning

Based on Hollway's (1984) works, the positioning theory explains how positioning exists in an exchange. Her earlier works first mentioned the concepts of 'positioning oneself' and 'taking up positions', in which she mentioned that individuals are "placed in relation to each other through the meanings which a particular discourse makes available" (Hollway, 1984, p.236). Using her work as a basis of research, Davies and Harré, became interested in this area and successfully expanded the theory in 1991. They believe that positioning theory is "the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines." (Davies & Harré, 1991, p. 58) Defined in an easier manner, positioning is "the discursive construction of personal stories that make a person's

actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts and within which the members of the conversation have specific locations” (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999, p.16).

In every conversation produced, each individual is entitled to position themselves. However, three factors need to be taken into consideration, and this includes:

- 1) An individual’s ability to position themselves is determined by individual differences;
- 2) The existing differences will have an effect on how willing people are to position themselves or be positioned by others;
- 3) Not all individuals will have the power to position themselves or be positioned as they wish to be.

Hence, the consistency of one’s positioning may vary greatly depending on the situation and context a person is placed in. Harré (2003, p.697), summarised this theory as a whole in the following statement:

“A position in an episode is a momentary assumption or ascription of a certain cluster of rights, duties, and obligations with respect to what sorts of things a certain person, in that position, can say and do. It is important to emphasize the ephemeral character of positions. They can be challenged, transformed, repudiated, exploited, expanded, and so on, and in those transformations the act-force of the joint actions of an episode ebb and flow. Furthermore, each speaker/hearer in an episode may construe what is said and done by reference to a different positioning, and so act in relation to different acts, even though all hear, in one sense, the same speech action”

The positioning of an individual can change immediately, depending on the dynamics of the context. Through discourse, conceptual repertoires are provided, giving us the opportunity to represent ourselves and others. For every discourse produced, a

limited number of 'slots' for individuals to occupy is present, and these slots are the subject positions which may be taken up by individuals as they interact (Burr, 1995) and these may be offered, accepted, claimed or resisted by the individuals (Davies & Harré, 1999). Positioning is deemed to be a useful approach as it allows further understanding of people and their identities. Not only does it answers the question of "who we are", but it also provides a sense of individuality and power, as individuals involved are given the right and power to put themselves or others in the desired light. Through the use of this theory in this study, it is hoped that this theory will help to uncover the use of positioning for this community of practice in this institution.

2.4.1 Positioning and Identity: Previous Studies

Søreide (2006) studied how narrative resources are constructed and negotiated to build up on several possible teacher identities through five Norwegian female elementary school teachers. It was the aim of the research to illuminate how teacher identities can be narratively constructed and understood, in which an in-depth interview session was carried out and analysed using a combination of post-structuralist, discourse and narrative identity theories. It was found that there were more than 30 subject positions, with four identity constructions listed: (i) the caring and kind teacher, (ii) the creative and innovative teacher, (iii) the professional teacher, and (iv) the typical teacher. Many of these teachers position themselves in a positive light too. From this analysis, results reflected that identities constructed are lived through to be unique, relevant and meaningful instead of identities which are ready-made and standardized. This notion in particular will serve as a basic guideline for the current study.

Arvaja (2016) looked into the negotiation and positioning of identities specifically in the context of pedagogical studies. A university teacher who was part of a one-year study program in an institution was part of the research. The university

teacher was required to write weekly learning diaries and in total, there were 18 entries, varying between 1500 to 2500 words. The entries were then coded and analysed for the different types of positioning, mainly voicing, evaluating and I-positionings. It was found that the subject of study mainly positioned herself through voicing and evaluating other characters and identities present.

Hall et.al (2010) explored the social functions of language with focus on identity development for both teachers and learners. Three middle-class classrooms narratives in an institution in the United States were recorded, transcribed and analysed. The classroom sessions ranged from two hours to a year long cross-case analysis. From the data analysed, it was found that not only do these teachers and students use language to position themselves and one another, but they also this to promote and encourage different types of engagement with literacy practices. The identities were also found to be intently created.

Mosvold and Bjuland (2016) in their research took two pre-service Mathematics teachers as part of their case study. The objective of the study was to look into how the teachers positioned themselves in the mentoring sessions, as well as how they were positioned by their mentor. A one-to-one interview with the subjects was conducted and videos were recorded during their mentoring sessions. Rough transcripts were produced at first, followed by a refined set later on in the project. From the analysis conducted, it was found that the positioning process from both parties cannot be viewed as separate entities, as the pre-teachers were found to be constantly engaging in the process of narratively positioning themselves in different contexts.

In another study related to positioning which was carried out by Ritchie (2002), the researcher looked into using the positioning theory to interpret the social interactions of students in a class where three aspects were looked into, namely gender, status and power. This study recorded evidences using a camera and the videotapes were then

transcribed and analysed. Not only that, the researcher has also carried out post-lesson interviews at two different times. In this particular study, it was found that different students positioned themselves and their peers differently. It was inferred that different students who are exposed to different interactions are more able to use available common assets in their surroundings to assist them in taking different positions during an exchange.

Yamakawa, Forman and Ansell (2005) collected data from a private elementary school, in a classroom consisting of 17 students over the course of four months. The aim of the study was to examine the role of positioning in the build up of identity in a Mathematics classroom. However, out of 17 students, this study only focused on two third grade pupils as their behaviours were the most prominent in the collected set of data. Through the analysis of revoicing and positioning, it was found that one of the student's identity as a math thinker changed from average to above average proficiency, while the other did not.

Kotsopoulos (2014) came up with a qualitative study in which she recorded 34 students, 19 boys and the rest girls, who were of 13 or 14 years old in an eighth-grade classroom, with the aim of looking into examples of (mis)alignment between both interactive and reflexive positionings. However, the researcher only chose to present results from five students. It was a year-long study and results from this study showed that collaborative learning might not be for everyone. It was also found that students who had misaligned positioning had differing experiences during the times collaborative learning was carried out.

In another different study related to the medical area, Lentz (2007) conducted a study on a group of registered nurses identifying themselves as patient care experts. At the same time, it was found that there is apparently a "disconnect" between what these students believe themselves to be and how they are perceived by others. Using an

analysis of linguistic features with the data taken from interviews and through their online course management, the researcher looked into how the nurses positioned themselves in their stories, to their audiences and to themselves.

In a study written by Andreouli (2010), a case study was done. This particular case study was taken from a bigger interview study, conducted with 33 naturalised citizens of the United Kingdom in the year 2007 to 2008. The aim of this paper was to look into processes of migration and naturalisation which are both associated to identity processes in the country mentioned earlier. From this study, it was found that through the different process of positioning, self-relations are constructed. This then gives a definition and a strong privilege towards British identity.

Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman (2003) conducted another study in relation to identity, subject positions and positioning theory. Using the qualitative method, a total of 45 group discussions and a couple of individual interviews were carried out. It was found that the boys all reacted differently to both group and individual interviews, which provided interesting ways to analyse the collected data.

To conclude, there have been extensive studies done within this related field, especially in the fields of education (Ritchie, 2002; Yamakawa Forman & Ansell, 2005; Kotsopoulos, 2014), medical (Lentz (2007), and migration (Andreouli, 2010). It appears that from these few studies, one can observe that through positioning, there are visible changes and differing experiences from one individual to another. However, very few have been done in relation to identity, positioning, assessment and narration combined together as a whole. Hence, it is timely that this current study is done to fill the existing gap. By combining identity, positioning and assessment together, the researcher hopes to be able to provide a platform of better understanding towards these three elements combined. Taking things into account from only one aspect may limit our views on this

matter. Since all three elements interconnect and run along similar lines, this will allow and demonstrate co-dependency between each other in the construction of subject positions and assessor identities.

2.5 Assessment

The core business of educators comprise not only of teaching, material preparation and curriculum design, but also assessment. Assessment is an important aspect in education and usually after the end of a programme or a course, assessments are carried out to gauge students' performance. In assessment it is essential that standardised methods are used. Marking schemes or scores must be valid and reliable. Saddler (1998) suggests that educators need to take into account four resources when assessing and they are:

- 1) knowledge on the subject matter,
- 2) understanding of criteria and standards which suits the task being tested,
- 3) evaluative ability to make judgements on students' performance, and
- 4) a set of attitudes towards teaching and learners.

This also includes their own ability to empathise with the learners, their desire to help students develop, improve, their personal concern for the feedback and veracity of their own judgements. These resources would contribute to the competence of the educators as assessors.

To date, there are many forms of standardised assessment tools applicable during an assessment session. The most relevant to this study is moderation, as it was used as the basis of the bigger project. Moderation is "the process of reconciling or

reducing differences in the judgements and standards used by different raters within a rating procedure” (McNamara, 2000, p.134). It has been identified that there are two types of moderation - internal moderation in reflection of assessment within the establishment, and external moderation in synchronisation with the standards on a national level (Adie, Lloyd & Beutel, 2013). It has been found that moderation has effectively helped in lowering down significant and differing opinions between oral assessors, leading them to being more consistent during the marking process.

Looking specifically at oral assessment, this approach ensures reliability and validity in the form of evaluating the students’ communication skills. This also comes as a method for the assessor to be confident that the delivered responses are from the students’ themselves, while at the same time encouraging in-depth preparation before the test itself. By assessing a student’s oral competence, not only will it help the assessor to gauge their level of soft skills, but this also allows for valuable practice in preparation for future professional activities. This has been proven to be effective by many educational institutions in keeping this method as part of their assessments.

In general, the practice of assessment is carried out in every institution for the purpose of ensuring that the objectives of the course offered are achieved. At the same time, it aims to provide constructive feedback to the students with regards to where they stand in their academic progress, hence, the opportunity for the students to improve themselves in the needed areas. Not only that, assessment is conducted as a method to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching. As such the current study has embarked on attempting to explain the relationship of the emerging job identities found during assessment.

2.5.1 Assessment: Previous Studies

In a study conducted by Wyatt-Smith, Klenowski and Gunn (2010), the three researchers explored the need of understanding the complexity of teachers' assessment and judgement practice in the context of Australia's education policy. In the research, they focused on analysing data taken from a moderation session between teachers, carefully stating the processes which occur in between the grading sessions. From the analysis, it was found that there was a loophole in how teachers place value and give students grades. The main concern after retrieving results from this study is how the mixture of existing factors impacted the assessors' judgement.

Crosthwaite, Boynton and Cole III (2017) analysed how teacher-raters identify and determine students' ability to talk and explain in detail about concepts and arguments pertaining to a subject in an oral assessment. Specifically, the study looked into how the assessors reach a point of agreement in assessing the students. Six teachers were taken in as the sample population, and videos of students in an oral assessment session was shown. The teachers were required to assess the students. A week later, interview sessions were carried out with these teachers to provide more opportunity for them to justify their ratings. It was found that there were a number of factors affecting the rater's decision, which included different beliefs and interpretations of assessment criteria.

Adie, Lloyd and Beutel (2013) looked into the moderation practices of twenty-five educators in one of the higher institution of learning in Australia. Through semi-structured interviews, it was found that there were four significant "discourses of moderation" (p.972). This included the elements of being fair and constant in assessing, the ability to justify the given evaluation, the community of practice built through the ongoing collaborative progression and the fundamentals of accountability in grading the

students. At the same time, the researchers stated that moderation is indeed highly complex and will be affected greatly by different practices, beliefs and expectations of the community.

Van der Shaaf, Baartman and Prins (2012) looked into analysing student portfolios in trying to find out whether or not the criteria of assessment can be used to improve content, communication sessions and argumentation between teachers during moderation. A total of six teachers were requested to evaluate 32 portfolios. The results found showed most of the teachers based their evaluation on their own opinion and were quick to agree on each other's judgements. The judgement process was deemed to not be of standards. The researchers suggested strongly for the implementation of assessment criteria to be further strengthen in order to increase the quality of the assessments.

From the studies stated above, it may be concluded that more research can be done in the future with regard to an educator's assessment practices. Assessment is indeed a very important aspect in a student's development, and plays a very vital role in education. Although judgements and assessments may appear to be subjective, with well-placed procedures, a collective and definite decision can be achieved.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The researcher has opted to use Søreide's (2006) theoretical framework as the main framework of this study. This framework proves to be the most suitable out of the many options before, with precise function in helping to answer the proposed research questions.

Using a combination of poststructuralist, discursive and narrative approaches to identity and research, Søreide (2006) came up with two main categories consisting of

this framework, namely “narrative resources” and “narrative editing”. This came about when she presupposed that people narrating stories should put into use narrative resources and editing techniques in order to build similarities, differences, coherence and diversity in their accounts.

As mentioned previously, the bigger picture of the framework branches into two different categories. Narrative resources is the first main category of this section, which attempts to explain the “what”s of identity construction. This refers specifically to subject positions and constructions of identities. As for the second category, narrative editing will look into the “how”s, with special attention to positioning, the narrative plot and counter narrative. However, this study will not be looking into narrative plot and counter narrative due to its irrelevance to this study. The table below shows a summary of this theoretical framework in table form.

Table 2.1: A table summary of Søreide’s (2006) theoretical framework

Category	Concept
Narrative Resources	Subject positions Identity construction
Narrative Editing	Positioning Narrative plot Counter narrative

Narrative resources: Subject positions

One of the research questions for this thesis is to identify the elements belonging to the identity of the assessors in the English language. According to Søreide (2007,

p.33), subject positions can be defined as “a point or a position in the discourse that individuals can identify with or reject”. They act as possible identification markers. A subject position can have conceptual repertoire, a location and structure, and are taken up by the negotiation of different individuals with identities which changes according to the circumstances of the given condition. With these stated features, subject positions often lead to a precise outlook of the world (Davies and Harré, 2001).

Narrative resources: Identity constructions

Different images of educators as assessors appeared as the subject positions seemed to strengthen each other, thereby creating certain patterns. These patterns generated images with different specific features. Though these features may sometimes appear unclear, the researcher was able to distinguish them. Identity construction is the outline of a possible identity with characteristic features, attitudes and behaviour, and thus, an important resource in the construction of identity. The word “construction” refers to the unfinished and floating aspect of these images of possible assessors. Like subject positions, identity constructions will change over time and within societies or groups of people. Although identity constructions are fluid, they exist more or less explicitly in all educational institutions and result in real and concrete, everyday practices and statements.

Narrative editing: Positioning

To date, there are two types of positioning – Reflexive and interactive. Instances when a teacher places another teacher in a certain position refers to reflexive positioning. On the other hand, interactive positioning refers to when a teacher positions

his or her own self (Davies and Harré, 2001). The positioning process here occurs in favour or opposed to the said subject positions and identity constructions. The concept of positioning is useful because it acts as an understanding of people as active agents in their own lives, and the construction and negotiation of identity as a dynamic, creative and changing activity (Davies and Harré, 2001). This study will be looking more into interactive positioning as it is more relevant to the aim and research questions of the research.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has attempted a comprehensive review of some of the major studies and research trends ongoing in the fields of narrative, identity, positioning and assessment. Having the benefit of previous research, this study hopes to gain more insight and revelation on the types of identities portrayed by oral assessors and how this can be understood further through the narratives provided.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to describe the identities portrayed by a group of assessors at a local tertiary institution, as an individual, and collectively as a group. At the same time, the study examines how the revealed identities can be both narratively constructed and understood. This chapter will provide detailed information on the design of the study, the profile of the participants, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Research Framework and Design

A qualitative approach was implemented as the main method in this research as the purpose is to explore the narratives of fourteen participants who are educators at a public institution. These educators take on the roles of assessors in a group oral interaction task. According to Creswell (2012), there are five process steps involved in a qualitative study. This includes (1) identifying the participants, (2) gaining access and obtaining permission from the relevant authorities, (3) considering the information needed to best answer the proposed research questions, (4) designing the right instruments in order to obtain the needed data, and finally, (5) taking into account any ethical issues which may arise. However, step four was removed for reasons that are provided in the section below.

3.1 Data Collection

3.3.1 Participants

Data for this study was taken with permission from a University Malaya Research Grant (UMRG) project titled “The Discourse of Assessors: a comparison of novice and experienced Assessors” (Project: RG331-11HNE). This explains the elimination of step four from Creswell’s list (2012) as the “right instruments” have been designed earlier, with data obtained within the expected time frame. Fourteen educators from the English Language Department of this institution were respondents in this study. Before the participants were narrowed down as the final sample group, a survey was distributed to the English Language teachers. Out of 52 staff members, 34 met the criterion. The participants were chosen based on their experience in assessing group oral interaction. This correlates with the variety of experience and challenges they have faced, which provided the means to answer the two research questions in this study.

It was noted that out of the final 14 respondents, there was one male participant while the rest were females. Their age ranged from 25 to 59 years old, with different years of experience correlating to their age. Majority of the participants have assessed group oral interaction tests, the least being a minimum of only two times. Majority of them stated that they have not attended training, while only three of them acknowledged that they had some form of training prior to assessing. The tables below provide more information as well as a summary on the fourteen participants in this study.

Table 3.1: General profiling of samples

Respondents	Gender	Age	Years of experience	Number of times in assessing group oral interaction	Have attended training
R1	Female	26	3 years	Yes (2 times)	Yes
R2	Female	25	2 years	Yes (3 times)	No
R3	Female	35	10 years	Yes (10 times)	No
R4	Female	53	28 years	Yes (11 times)	No
R5	Female	59	30 over years	Yes (too many times to remember)	Yes
R6	Female	51	12 years	Yes (9 times)	No
R7	Female	40	9 years	Yes (3 times)	No
R8	Female	44	20 years	Yes (about 22 times)	No
R9	Male	30	4 years	Yes (5 times)	No
R10	Female	57	34 years	Yes (22 times)	No
R11	Female	40+	24 years	Yes (too many times to remember)	No
R12	Female	46	20 years	Yes (more than 23 times)	No, but ended up training teachers
R13	Female	52+	28.5 years	Yes (more than 12 times)	Yes
R14	Female	36	8 years	Yes (once)	No

Table 3.2: Summary of the participants' profiles

Details of respondents	Statistics
Gender	1 male, 13 female
Age	25-59 years old
Years of experience	2-34 years
Assessed group oral interaction	2-20 times
Previously attended training	3 yes, 11 no

3.4 Research Instruments

Both questionnaire and interview methods were used in order to elicit responses from the respondents with regard to their experiences and challenges as assessors. In this study, the questionnaires were distributed first. Once the suitable respondents were

selected, the interview sessions were then carried out.

3.4.1 Questionnaire for the Study

A survey was first distributed to all the teaching staff in both existing sectors within the same institution. All potential participants of the study were required to answer all the questions posed. An example of the questionnaire distributed can be found in Appendix C.

3.4.2 Interview Questions

After the survey was conducted, the participants were selected based on their experience in assessing group oral interaction, and of these, 14 were selected. From here, an individual one-to-one interview was done with the said fourteen. A semi-structured interview was carried out with the intention to elicit as much information as possible to answer the research questions posed in the larger study. It is to be noted that the interviews were labelled as 'semi-structured'. This is due to the nature of the exchange not leaning towards having a two-way conversation, instead, it is for the interviewers to prompt the interviewees when necessary using the guided interview questions as listed below. The interviewees were given room to narrate their own stories whenever possible. The table shows a summary of the main questions asked in the interviews.

Table 3.3: Questions for the interview sessions

Main questions
Could you share with us your past and present experience as an assessor, and what are the challenges you faced as an assessor?
Follow up/Prompt questions
Where were you before UM and how long have you been here?
Have you had any training in assessment?
How do you ensure that you assess them fairly?
How did you pick up the ability to assess?

3.5 Conducting the Analysis

Data from this project was analysed using Søreide's (2006) approach. Søreide introduced a three-phased process, which includes:

1. identification of subject positions;
2. identification of the use of subject positions as narrative resources; and
3. identification of multiple teacher identities constructed in the narratives.

This was adapted from her work in "Narrative Construction of Teacher Identity: Positioning and Negotiation" (2006). As the data were being analysed, it was found that step 1 needed to be modified to ensure that the subject positions analysed from the interview scripts were concrete. Hence, a guideline which was already used by another body (in Aviation) was adopted for use. The work was titled "FOCA English Language Proficiency Test for Pilots: Handbook for English Language Assessors" (public link: [file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Language%20Assessor%20Handbook%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Language%20Assessor%20Handbook%20(3).pdf)).

This was adapted as part of step 1. Even though it was for pilots, the nature of the test is group interaction. Published and updated in October 2016, this guideline served as a reference, which will be further explained in section 3.5.1.

Steps 1 and 3 above were used to answer the first research question, which looked into the typologies of identities portrayed by the teachers as oral assessors as an

individual, and collectively as a group. Step 2, on the other hand, is used to answer the second research question, which aimed to look into how these teacher identities are narratively constructed and understood using the available resources.

3.5.1 Identifying Subject Positions

In the first round of analysis, as mentioned earlier, it was found that the need to fall back on a credible list of assessor characteristics was necessary in order to ensure validity. Before the guideline was adopted in this study, efforts were made in obtaining the main copy of the referred guidebook used for reference by the department. However, the guidebook cannot be accessed as it was a confidential document. Hence, the above mentioned handbook was used to serve as a basis of understanding the roles and tasks of assessors in oral examinations. It is useful in that it provides very detailed information on how to be an oral assessor and also describes issues pertaining to the field of oral assessment.

The next step involved extracting comments which identifies the characteristics of an assessor from the handbook. Quotes taken from the interview transcripts were matched with the ones taken from the guideline. Then, the subject position is labelled to reflect the quotes extracted from the two documents. The same step is applied to both individual and group subject positions. An example is as given:

Table 3.4: Example of how a subject position is analysed

Extracted quotes from handbook	Extracted quotes from interview transcripts	Subject positions
Assessors should familiarise themselves fully with all material before carrying out an exam (Section: Testing Speaking Ability)	<i>“...when you really study, you know, you really study the scoring guide;; and then (.) you underst- you know which level the student belongs to...”</i> (R2, Lines 66-68)	The assessor is fully equipped and ready for assessment

3.5.1 The Construction of Multiple Assessor Identities

To create a bigger thematised category which can be referred to as “multiple assessor identity”, various similar subject positions are identified. Subject positions alike listed from step 1 are first categorised together according to similarity. Once identified, the category is labelled to create one of the few multiple assessor identities. An example is as shown below:

Table 3.5: Example of how similar subject positions are categorized together

Similar subject positions categorised	Multiple assessor identities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The assessor is fair• The assessor is not biased• The assessor is cautious	The fair and responsible assessor

Once a significant category under multiple assessor identity is labelled and categorised, it is given a definition. This definition is gathered from the elements extracted and described by the guideline and participants. For example, the simple

definition to “the fair and responsible assessor” would be of someone who takes the initiative to familiarise herself with the test materials and scoring guides, rechecks for mistakes and acts without being biased and unfair. These are examples of some of the few characteristics listed in detail to describe the multiple assessor identity which is elaborated and explained more in Chapter 4 under section 4.3.

3.5.2 Positioning of Assessor Identities as Oral Assessors

In order to answer the second research question, a look into how the found subject positions are used is analysed by using negative or positive positioning. As previously discussed in Section 2.5, the explanation which follows shows whether the respondents associate themselves to the said subject positions found in step 1. An instance of positive positioning can be seen in the example below:

Table 3.6: Example of positive positioning

Respondent	Excerpt from interview transcript
R13	“I’m willing to learn , do and learn kind of thing, you know...” (Line 441)

In this example, the subject position portrayed by the respondent is “an assessor who is willing to learn”. Learning takes many different forms. It is expected of assessors to undergo training before they are allowed to assess oral examinations. However, R13 has acquired her assessing skills through a different form of learning. From the statement above, through her emphasis, she identifies, recognises and associates herself with this subject position of an assessor who is willing to learn, resulting in positive

positioning.

This next example shows the opposite of positive positioning.

Table 3.7: Example of negative positioning

Respondent	Excerpt from interview transcript
R7	“I think sometimes I will be more lenient lo.” (Line 82)

From the extract above, it can be observed that R7 disassociates herself from the subject position of an assessor who is strict. She appears to oppose and distance herself by saying that she sometimes will be more lenient to her students. From this stance, it is safe to conclude that this respondent does not identify herself as an assessor who is strict, opposed to what the education community would expect of an assessor. This example exhibits negative positioning.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Permission to use the existing data was obtained from the project members with the condition that one of the member acts as the supervisor of this thesis. Once approval was given, the data was analysed accordingly, respecting the wish of the participants to remain anonymous. In both the survey and interviews carried out, it was noted that anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to all the sample population. This was stated in the consent form given. They were, at any point too, given the freedom to stop their participation should issues of comfortability arise. Only willing educators from the

faculty were recruited for this purpose.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has discussed in detail how the study was carried out, in terms of research design, instruments, participants, data collection and lastly, data analysis. The design of this study used was able to reveal interesting results from the data obtained. The next chapter will provide the findings and discussion of the data.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides analysis of the data to answer both research questions with discussion of the findings. The first part explains in detail on the identity of the educators as revealed through the data analysis: firstly, the focus is on individual subject positions, and secondly collectively by groups. Following this, elements which are found to have a contributing factor to the construction of the multiple assessor identity will also be discussed. To conclude, narrative positioning is discussed to answer the “how” of the second research question posed in this study.

4.2 Identity of the Educators

As previously mentioned, Davies and Harré (2001) argues that for every position analysed, a precise outlook of the world is being opened and this refers to the context of leading the reader to have a better understanding of the subject, environment and the world from a detailed and exact point of view. Hence, in order to relate to the above statement in the context of assessors for oral exams, the analysis of the different subject positions from the fourteen interview transcripts hopes to shed some light into understanding this major role of an educator.

4.2.1 Subject Position: Individual

In total, thirteen individual subject positions were found. This section will first explain the list of subject positions which are expected to be found in an assessor by the standards as posed in the FOCA handbook (see section 3.5, link available at

The focus on other emerging subject positions which appear to also have possible contributing elements to the make-up of an oral assessor will also be described. A summary of all thirteen individual subject positions can be found in Appendix D and E.

4.2.1.1 Subject positions in Line with the Expected Norm of an Assessor

From the analysis done, three subject positions matched the various criteria listed. The first set of criteria specifies and emphasizes that an assessor should have the following characteristics when conducting assessments:

*Assessors should **be aware** that just because a candidate replies to a question they may not necessarily have understood the question (Section: Comprehension)*

*Assessors should also **be aware** of their own language when repeating and/or paraphrasing (Section: Comprehension)*

*Assessors should also **be aware** that speakers with high levels of proficiency often speak too fast, leading to poor fluency and difficulty in comprehension for the listener (Section: Fluency)*

The above criteria seem to match R1 the best, as stated in her following statement:

*“I’m a **bit aware**, that kind of thing. I’m a bit **aware**, of- of you know, **finding errors**, ah I’m a bit aware of- of:: both the task of the scoring” (Lines 89-91)*

As mentioned by R1, as an assessor, she is both mindful of errors made by the students, as well as the task of allocating marks to the students. When an assessor is

fully aware, her attention span increases, hence resulting in fewer errors made during the assessment. This is a vital step in assessing, ensuring quality work and reflecting good assessing ethics. By being fully aware at all times, R1 has helped to eliminate unnecessary mistakes, leading to a more efficient work pace. From the sentiments expressed by R1, an appropriate subject position that aligns with the label “the assessor is aware” is noted.

The second subject position reflects an assessor who is strict. A strict assessor in this study is specifically characterised by the following criterion:

*“The Assessor **must not** react in a negative way to any answers given, **give words** when the candidate cannot find or remember them, **give translations** or **accept non-English words** or **accept body language** from the candidate.” (Section: The role of an assessor)*

Found from the analysis, only one assessor successfully fit the criterion above. R7 portrays this particular subject position well in her interview transcript, as shown in the extract below:

*“So and then, I- I:: am a **very structured** person, **I follow rules especially during the tests::**, and I follow all- all the things. So after that I get very mangzhang, and:: that sort of things la...” (Lines 395-396)*

As specified, an assessor must not react in a negative way to any answers given, or provide words when the candidate cannot find or remember them. The assessor also cannot translate or accept non-English words or read and make a conclusion from the candidate’s body language. In general, R7 did not specify any of those in her statement

above. However, she did mention how she is a very structured individual, adhering strictly to rules especially during when an assessment is conducted. As an assessor, being rigid and structured is an important quality, as this allows for the given standards to be kept and observed. Adhering to the rules given shows how responsible R7 is during the time of assessment.

The third subject position found is an assessor who is strategic. According to the listed criteria, it is essential for an assessor to “*take as many notes as possible*” (Section: The Role of an Assessor) during the assessment. This is to ensure efficiency for referencing and feedback purposes. R8 in the following lines below indicated so in the following extract:

*“Yes. And I think, that’s why (.) I have developed my own strategies when I assess, you know, **taking down things...**”* (Lines 30-32)

From this statement, she proves that the exact action was carried out. However, it was observed in her sentence that she has “developed” this strategy on her own. This could be due to the present department’s handbook not listing the step of taking notes down as part of an assessor’s strategy. The lack of having any form of formal training throughout her teaching years could also be a contributing factor. Nevertheless, R8 has proven that with her years of experience, the need for making use of different types of strategies is essential in ensuring the smooth running of the assessment process.

4.2.1.2 Emerging Subject Positions: Individual

Section 4.2.1.1 has provided an explanation on some of the subject positions found in reference to what is expected of an oral assessor. This section, however, will cover a few other subject positions found to exhibit similarities and characteristics of an oral assessor. The subject positions found ranges from an assessor who is empathetic and careful to someone who is logical, encouraging and willing to take risks. In total, there are ten emerging subject positions found.

For the first subject position, R1 proposes herself to be of an assessor who is sympathetic towards her students, especially to those who were not able to converse and use the language well. In lines 93-96, she mentioned the following:

*“I actually **looking for what- anything that can fulfill each (.) criteria. So that I can give marks.** If not, if they do not fulfill, each criteria, so no- you know, marks would be lower..”* (Lines 93-96)

From her statement above, she portrayed how she looks for any elements which could contribute in fulfilling each of the evaluated criteria. She understands the hardship and struggles of being a student who tries hard to excel in the subject but is only equipped with limited language skills. Not only that, R1 demonstrates herself too as an assessor who constantly wants to improve through the initiative and action of asking. This is evident in the extract below:

*“I refer to the other’s coordinator as well, how- how should I rate or assess the students. Ya. So then I:: **do ask a lot**, and then:: I:: learn from:: from you know, from my first semester”* (Lines 183-185)

From this, it shows that R1 is not shy to clarify her doubts, or even to ask for more information from the other educators and fellow colleagues in the same institution. Through her effort, the knowledge that she gained will help her in the course of her job, contributing to good assessment practices. Another factor as to why she wants to constantly improve is the fact that she has only assessed twice over the course of three years as observed in the survey form distributed. This puts her under the “novice” category, and this also implies she still has room for improvement. At the same time, R1 comes across as an assessor who is positive, as evident in the extract below:

“Just believe in yourself, go there positively, positive thinking, do not bias, read the score carefully, and that’s it” (Lines 296-298)

From this, she portrays herself as someone who believes in herself, and has trained her mind to think positively. This is an essential quality needed in a good oral assessor as the task is not an easy one. There are many factors that make the assessment of oral exams difficult. Having a positive outlook in general has helped her in carrying out her role as an assessor well.

Moving on to R7, she claims to be someone who is empathetic towards her students. By showing this quality as an assessor, it has assisted her in making the candidates feel more relaxed, hence helping them to get better grades during the test. This is evident from the interview transcript in lines 40-45:

*“Sometimes I find that **I could empathize** with the students::, so what I did would be::, make myself like a clown::, and then:: sometimes:: act it out, and then the students felt more relaxed in that sense::, and then those very shy ones will contribute more...”*

R7’s act of empathizing with the students has shown how she understands the nerves and pressure a student may face during assessment. As quoted, she mentioned that a student will feel that they are “being evaluated”, hence, resulting in them being “more stressed out”. Stressing unnecessarily in an assessment could clearly impact a student’s scores. Hence, by doing so, R7’s act may help increase the students’ chances of scoring better in the assessment.

As someone who has 34 years of experience in the field of education, R10 mentioned in her interview that an essential part of growing and becoming a good assessor is to “learn from your mistakes”. In lines 50-52 she said:

*“And also to be able to acknowledge that (.) you know, you have made mistakes, you have not made the accurate assessment, and **to learn from your mistakes...**”*

R10’s statement in the above shows how important mistakes contribute to the training of an oral assessor. Making mistakes is an effective method of learning, as this is how one matures into a good and reliable oral assessor.

R12, on the other hand, explains how careful she is as an assessor. She mentioned in lines 198-199 how she “*puts in a lot of thoughts*” into the way she constructs her questions during the assessment, as well as into the way she scores the candidate. The subject positions portrayed by R12 shows how essential this quality is as

an oral assessor, and how serious R12 takes her position into practice. A careful oral assessor will lead to better outcomes in terms of how the assessment was carried out, at the same time, ensuring quality, validity and reliability.

Running along similar lines, R4 demonstrates how she is adaptable as an assessor. Being adaptable allows one to cope well with their surroundings, especially with the many unexpected changes which might occur in the given setting. This quality is an added advantage to have as it provides the perfect growth opportunity for the assessor. She affirms this in line 221 of her transcript below:

*“I suppose you **have to adapt** (to learning new things), you know, to try...”*

It was also observed that three out of the six emerging subject positions was brought forward by R13. Her extracted quotes show how she demonstrates this:

*“I give credit to myself, as a person who’s quite, **as a person who’s got basic common sense lah**. You know, so the common sense took me along, ya, I wasn’t so bad, my range of marks was always (.) more or less similar to my senior’s...” (Lines 30-33)*

*“I am brave lah. **I take risks**, and I just go, even though when I don’t have the best answer, I would know how to (.) go around it...” (Lines 214-216)*

*“Because I always say, **you can improve**. I always tell them, **you can do better**” (Lines 412-413)*

R13 puts forward the idea of an assessor who is logical, brave and encouraging. As someone who is carrying out the task of assessing another, it is important to be able to think logically, without being too emotional in the assessment process (lines 30-33). R13 demonstrates the quality of her willingness to take risks during the assessment for herself and for her students, with a strong justification as to why the particular action was taken should the action be questioned. Besides that, being encouraging is also another essential subject position brought forward by R13 as shown in lines 412-413. She provides words of encouragement to her students, at the same time spurring them on so that they can improve.

4.2.2 Subject position: Group

This next section will describe the subject positions found collectively as a group, where instances of similar stances were brought forward by more than one educator in the sample population. This will show in agreement how associated and similar they are to the listed subject positions, linking the many elements together which contributes to the make-up of a good oral assessor. Similar to section 4.2.1, the discussion of the findings is explicated in the same order and a summary can be found in Appendix F and G. The following will explain the subject positions found in further details.

4.2.2.1 Subject positions Found Collectively as a Group

“The assessor is cautious”

There are three important steps for an assessor to take if she ever faces any

doubt. The first includes either “consulting with a native speaker examiner or a linguistic specialist, clarifying when an ambiguous situation arises and lastly, cross-referencing their notes with the given rating scale” (Section: Fluency and The Role of the Assessor). It was found that this subject position was referred to most by the sample population: specifically by R1, R3, R5, R8, R9, R10, R13 and R14. The excerpts below highlight this subject position well, explaining the subjects’ action of being cautious.

In the following extracts quoted below, it was observed that R1, R3 and R8 cross check mostly with their coordinator, and also with experienced assessors who are usually their colleagues.

R1: ***“I refer to the other coordinator as well, how- how should I rate or assess the students.”*** (Lines 184-185)

R3: ***“Of course I consulted the previous coordinator about it. I mean, of course she gave me some tips, about that, and I got some help and ah (.) ah from part timers as well, and some teachers who were teaching the same course as well...”*** (Lines 85-88)

R8: ***“and I checked with the person who’s teaching next door, I checked with the coordinator, I checked with the new ones, the more senior ones, I checked with people, I checked against uhm scores for previous assessment, and at one point, before I took on the course, I actually went in for the oral assessment, and sat with the teacher...”*** (Lines 76-80)

It is especially interesting to note that even for R5, who has more than 30 years of experience in the field, would still prefer to have someone to assess with her during the said sessions. This shows how much weight and responsibility go into assessing a student. Every candidate who sits for the said oral tests deserve to be given equal and

fair marks, and in order to do so, having another assessor to gauge the performance would provide some objectivity to a very subjective exam such as oral tests performance and this is evident in the following extract (R5):

“So uhm, yeah, if you talk about oral assessment, I’ll be the first to say, I would rather have someone with me, than not have someone with me for assessment.”(Lines 268-270)

It is also interesting to note how R1, R5 and R13 who have all undergone training previously still refer to another person for clarification. One would expect an assessor to be more confident after having undergone formal training, as they have been equipped with the necessary skills to assess. However, evidence from the transcripts shows the opposite. As confident as an assessor can be, it is advisable to cross check with another in order to avoid mistakes in assessing. Their following statements below shows how these assessors still need to cross check with another.

R5: *“So uhm, yeah, if you talk about oral assessment, I’ll be the first to say, I would rather have someone with me, than not have someone with me for assessment. For the simple reason, as objective as I am, as impartial as I am, you know, there is always a possibility of, you know, being very subjective sometimes.”* (Lines 268-272)

R13: *“I give credit to myself, as a person who’s quite, as a person who’s got basic common sense lah. You know, so the common sense took me along, ya, I wasn’t so bad, my range of marks was always (.) more or less similar to my senior’s”* (Line 29-33)

R9 and R10 are assessors who appear to be very cautious as they would self-check a few times to ensure they have been fair to the candidates. This can be seen that the effort exists in ensuring that they are carrying out the assessment according to the standards set. Through this, it reflects how the subjects are extremely cautious of their action, with the intention of delivering their responsibilities as accurately as possible. It was observed that R9 repeated the word “recheck” for a total of five times in her interview, showing how much she emphasizes on doing so after every assessment.

R9: “*When I- when I doubt myself, (.) I **recheck**.*” (Line 186)

“*Ya, I **recheck**.*” (Line 188)

“*I **recheck** back, I try to recall, because it’s still fresh, in my mind. So I-**recheck** first*”(Lines 195-196)

“*Ya. Before you even walk out the class, you need to **recheck**.*” (Line 200)

R10: “*and then what I did was, I actually went through a lot of past year papers, just to gauge the standard, and then I send it in, and I actually, make sure, that I **take into consideration every single comment** they make, and then I **check again**, and then I see*” (Lines 69-72)

R14, on the other hand, prefers to discuss the outcome of her assessment in a group manner so as to allow constructive feedback from more people in the team.

*“I really prefer if there’s going to be a group, where in the group, you **can actually voice out**, you know, question and answers, and then you highlight errors, past errors” (Lines 304-307)*

Part of an oral assessor’s natural instinct is to be cautious and to recheck after every assessment. This is so as to ensure that the assessment has been carried out in a smooth manner as unwanted consequences on the candidates’ marks and future can happen should the assessors be overly confident with her assessment.

“The assessor is fully equipped and ready for assessment”

In order to be a good assessor, one of the main criteria is to “familiarise oneself with all given materials” (Section: Testing Speaking Ability) before an assessment is conducted. By doing so, assessors will be able to have an idea of the execution of the assessment as well as the expected outcome at the end of the test. This is an essential step in determining whether or not the assessor is a suitable person in carrying out the given assessment. There are many different ways in which assessors can prepare themselves, and some of these methods vary as shown by two of the respondents.

For R2 and R10, both respondents agree on the importance of studying the scoring guide beforehand. This subject position becomes explicit when R2 and R10 states of the following:

*R2: “When you really study, you know, **you really study the scoring guide**:, and then (.) you underst- you know which level the student belongs to...” (Lines 66- 68)*

R10: “*And then gradually, you know, after **being exposed to a lot of different scoring guides**, because it’s like every other place has a different scoring guide, every other fac has a different scoring guide...*” (Lines 10-13)

Different scoring guides can widen your perspective as an assessor, providing further details on the many different aspects an assessor can gauge a student’s performance. Studying the scoring guide too allows the assessor an added advantage during the session. For one to be able to know how the candidate performed without referring to the scoring guide at the given point of time will enable the assessor to save time and avoid confusion and pressure of having to grade him or her at that particular moment. This small act will help in ensuring efficiency and flow during the test.

Not only does studying the scoring guide come into use, but going through past year papers as mentioned by R10 will also help, as evident below:

“*...and then what I did was, **I actually went through a lot of past year papers**, just to gauge the standard, and then I send it in, and I actually, make sure, that I take into consideration every single comment they make, and then I check again, and then I see.*” (Lines 69-72)

The comments made from previous assessors can act as a referral document for the current assessor, which will help in assessing better. By going through previous papers, R10 was able to see where the standards stand, and at the same time, equip herself fully for the upcoming assessments. Similarly, R14 prepares herself by studying and analysing past videos before the assessment sessions. This allows the respondent to fully organise herself both mentally and physically. Having prior knowledge beforehand

and knowing what to expect will allow R14 to be ready and prepared in assessing her students.

*“As an assessor, I felt that I was **prepared**”* (Lines 189-190)

*“We will be actually **looking at previous videos**, and we will be **analysing the videos**...”* (Lines 193-194)

“The assessor is creative”

As an assessor, being creative is an asset. Creativity while conducting an assessment not only helps to keep the attention going, but it also acts as a type of stimulation in order to garner more response from the students. In this analysis, being creative is defined as the “ability to vary the questions asked to the students” (Section: Question Techniques), which may sometimes include personal follow-up questions or formulating questions on the spot. From the analysis done, it was found that two of these assessors take up the subject position of being creative, using different strategies and approach as shown in the excerpt below.

R7’s approach comes in the form of “leading:” She mentioned in line 29 how she tries to lead them in in order to give more examples. R11, on the other hand, uses a different approach.

*“I actually let them have their say, and then when I see that, they can actually go on more, but they (.) **you know, they need a push, I would (.) give them the push**, I would (.) say something, right, it can be a word or two, and then they pick on and they...”* (Lines 62-65)

Here, R11 is seen to ‘push’ her students in the right direction until they have successfully managed to answer the given question on their own. Both these techniques can be classified as a sign of creativity, a method used to prompt the students effectively during the assessment. However, this unique skill may be hard to manage, as the assessors need to be able to distinguish clearly the difference between giving away the main answer and guiding them to it which can be extremely difficult. It does appear that a high level of creativity would be vital for an assessor to manoeuvre and “play by ear” in an assessment situation. At the same, this approach would also allow constant engagement between the assessors and the candidates during the assessment session.

“The assessor is fair and not biased”

As an assessor, being fair and not biased is sometimes a skill most difficult to deal with. As assessors are humans and not robots, it is undeniable that there will be occasions where feelings and emotions are forces that cannot be dismissed and at times biasness brings about consequences as it affects the candidates’ results. As far as possible assessors must maintain objectivity at all times but this is not as easy as it seems. A fair and non-bias assessment would allow students who are assessed the equal opportunity to showcase their knowledge and this is supposedly able to allow assessors to gauge their level of teaching as well (that is, what is taught in class has been learned if the students do well in the test). By right, an assessor “should not test applicants to whom they have given language training to” (Section: Assessors). This could affect the assessment sessions, as evident in lines 61-64 where R8 mentions:

“There were issues with teachers teaching their own students, and then I was able to spot that this would be (.) problem area, I then requested to implement the two assessor system. so someone who has not taught at all, comes in and assesses it, ah:: we swap groups...” (Lines 61-64)

She then took the initiative to implement the two-assessor practice, as part of a prevention system to avoid biasness during oral assessment, as supported by R4.

*“...But we **assess other people’s classes**, you see? So to introduce some kind of element of moderation”* (Lines 65-67)

This shows how assessors are more accountable this way, with the probability of biasness lowered and eliminated.

Not only that, R1 also supports this subject position well by mentioning clearly in lines 120-121 that as an assessor, one must not be biased. She too mentioned that the need to know how to control one’s feelings is essential in order to provide the right marks for the students.

*“Being an assessor, so you **cannot be biased**”* (Lines 120-121)

*“you need to- you **need to know how to control them, how to control your feeling**, and how to control your marks then”* (Lines 324-325)

R2, in her interview, mentioned that her method of being fair is simple. If she thinks the answer given by the student matches the evaluated criteria, then marks will be given

accordingly.

*“If I compared to the scoring guideline, ok, compared to what the student is presenting, if- if I think **it matches**, and then (.) **I’ll give the marks.**”*
(Lines 125- 127)

The idea of short changing a student is also not favourable, as stated by R6 in lines 306-308. A student should never be treated unfairly by the act of withholding their marks.

*“I feel we must **not shortchange the students**, we must not shortchange them, because, we only meet them for, three hours a week.”*(Lines 306-308)

By also strategically taking notes down, should candidates be dissatisfied with their marks due to evidence that there has been unfairness on the part of the assessors, proof will be evident as mentioned by R4.

R4: *“I try to **take down notes**, while listening...”* (Lines 32-34)

4.2.2.2 Emerging Subject Positions: Group

“The assessor is ready, willing and quick to learn”

As an assessor, being adaptable is an added advantage. It was found that a few of the respondents possess this quality, with the willingness, readiness and having the ability to learn from others. It was also observed that a majority of the respondents agree that this skill is ultimately essential in the long run.

R13 emphasised on the importance of being ready to learn in line 436, as she mentions how she exposes herself to many different experiences (including training and volunteering to take on assessment tasks) in order to gain more knowledge and skills over the years. Not only that, she is also willing to learn all kinds of things, especially from people who has had more experience than her. This trait is great as she does not only limit herself to knowledge from specific areas, but the testing field on the whole. The excerpts below shows clearly the subject positions she brought forward in her interview transcript.

*“And from **there I learned and picked up** things, ah, although I didn’t go for any assessment course, and I’m not a very assessment kind of person”*
(Lines 33-35)

*“And I appreciated those teachers who were (.) more matured, they were older than me, and I was **willing to learn from them**”* (Lines 219-221)

*“**Readiness to learn**::, being u- willing to expose myself...”* (Lines 436)

"I'm willing to learn, do and learn kind of thing, you know..." (Line 441)

Similarly, R7, R8 and R10 have had similar stances, where three of them concurred that they had been quick to learn from teamwork, self-study and interactions with other people around them. They were quick to note of the changes and to gain the skills around them, which in turn, has successfully built them into the assessors that they are now.

R7: *"so I learn from there (from observing my colleague) how they- how they evaluate then"* (Lines 193-194)

"And also I look at the er descriptors, and then sometimes the comments that they put... So these things were helpful" (Lines 201-202)

R8: *"I picked up a lot more from my interactions with the team"* (Lines 93-94)

R10: *"I learned a lot from my colleagues when I first started here"* (Lines 14- 15)

"The assessor is more confident"

The next most prominent subject position found in the group category shows that three out of the fourteen assessors are now more confident in their assessment. A significant change can be seen from when they first started out with assessing, as quoted by R7, R9 and R13 below:

R7: *"Slightly more confident. Yeah, slightly more confident."* (Line 224)

R9: *“We’re learning. So right- right **now I’m quite confident of my assessment**, and plus I’m doing the MUET just to improve myself as well, marking MUET (.) scripts”* (Lines 106-108)

R13: *“but now, that I’m more matured, and of course, going to retire, I’m thinking, ya, I’m **confident enough** to give that student 10, I can justify for it”*(Lines 112-114)

Note that from all three excerpts above, that the words “slightly”, “quite” and “enough” were used. This seems to signify their confidence level, which has successfully developed over the years. These words represent the transition process in which all three have gone through over the years, from having zero knowledge to a level in which they are comfortable with. What is of utmost interest is the usage of the word “more matured” by R13, which she used to describe herself, after having over 28 years of experience teaching and assessing. Although she has undergone training beforehand and has assessed oral assessment for more than twelve times, it shows how one can still not be as confident as assessing is a very subjective matter. However, it is safe to say that with multiple experiences to polish their skills over the years, the subjects are shown to be more grounded in assessing their students now, in comparison to when they first started out in this field. This can be supported by R9’s excerpt in lines 213-214, in which she mentioned that having experience can really help. Her confidence level has also increased, with her ability to judge and assess without even referring to the scoring sheets.

*“I can still do (**mark without the raters**), because it was based on my **experience**. Marking students, yeah”* (Lines 213-214)

“The assessor is cooperation oriented”

In every organization, teamwork is one of the most essential values to have. Without a team, an organisation will not be able to go far in achieving its objectives and goals. Likewise, it is the same for all the educators in this public institution. A few of the respondents have demonstrated the subject position in which they are “cooperation oriented”. It was observed that R8, R12 and R13 share the same views, in which everyone agrees that the existing teamwork in the institution does contribute to the realisation of a good oral assessor. R8 mentioned in line 99 that teamwork has very much shaped her learning as an assessor. Receiving different feedback and constructive criticism from people who share the same working experience too can help in making one assess better, as again stated by R9 in this excerpt :

*“... **when you have a team**, when you have criteria, when you have got transparencies, then I think **it works a lot better**.”* (Lines 104-106)

R13, on the other hand, mentioned the following:

*“I think we cannot learn in an ivory tower lah, we **need to work with people...**”* (Lines 231-232)

According to R13, the learning process of an assessor is not only from books and completing a degree itself, but especially from working with a variety of people. Similarly R12 touches about how to work with people in the same team.

*“If I think they don’t, and then **I never make an outright criticism**, I’ll always say, I’m not sure about this, perhaps you want to take a look at it, if you feel it’s alright, it’s fine. It’s in the way you phrase things” (Lines 308-311)*

From this, R12 states that she will never make an “outright criticism” towards another team member, ensuring harmony and peace within the circle. This is essential as it determines the chemistry and the dynamics of a well-lubricated team.

4.3 The Construction of Multiple Assessor Identities

Identity constructions may not always be in stable modes due to their ever changing nature. According to Søreide (2007, p.34), identity constructions are identities which “exist more or less explicitly in all educational institutions and result in very real and concrete everyday practices and statements.” In this section of the analysis, how multiple assessor identities are created through the process of condensing the listed subject positions found will be described.

Based on the analysis, there are five identity constructions found within this community of educators. Before moving on to the discussion of the found identity construction, the table below shows the classification of subject positions based on similar characteristics into the new found categories.

Table 4.1: Classification of similar subject positions into categories of multiple assessor identities

Similar subject positions categorised	Multiple assessor identities
The assessor is fair and not biased The assessor is careful The assessor is cautious The assessor is aware The assessor is strict The assessor is fully equipped and ready for assessment	The fair and responsible assessor
The assessor is more confident The assessor is ready, willing and quick to learn The assessor who wants to improve The assessor learns from mistakes The assessor is brave	The developed and improving assessor
The assessor is empathetic The assessor is logical The assessor is encouraging The assessor is sympathetic	The student oriented assessor
The assessor is strategic The assessor is creative	The innovative assessor
The assessor is cooperation oriented The assessor is positive	The team oriented assessor

Table 4.1 above shows the categorisation of similar subject positions found from section 4.2 into five major categories under multiple assessor identities. This section has been created in order to define some of the major elements and characteristics which contribute towards the making of a good assessor. The first part of this section will discuss the elements of “*The fair and responsible assessor*”. The rest will follow in the order of Table 4.1.

“The fair and responsible assessor”

This first identity construction is made up with the most number of subject positions. It seems to be the most important identity construction in comparison to the

rest, as this is most associated to the role of an assessor. Listed under this category are the subject positions fair and not biased, careful, cautious, aware, strict and fully equipped and ready for assessment. All six of these subject positions are placed together as they share the same common ground, all pointing towards the keywords of “fairness” and “responsibility”.

From the analysis done, this identity here can be defined as assessors who take the initiative to study and familiarise themselves with the test materials and scoring guides. Such assessors will always be ready in the event of an assessment, prepared with enough knowledge to conduct and evaluate the session in a smooth manner. At the same time, they are those who take the initiative to always recheck their scores, either by clarifying the existing doubts with a fellow colleague or running through the given scoring guide, not just once but a minimum of two times. This should be done for the purpose of affirmation.

Another main criterion of this particular identity construction is the ability to always be fair and not biased towards the candidates. This quality is one of the many vital ones which contribute to being good assessors, as it is undeniably a difficult aspect to master. Assessors should also always adhere to rules and be aware of the existing context, especially of the fulfilled criteria and mistakes made and other related and relevant aspects evaluated during the assessment. Without careful consideration, the decision made during the assessment could affect the grades of the candidates assessed.

“The developed and improving assessor”

There are five subject positions classified under this second identity construction. The list consists of an assessor who is now more confident, constantly

improving, learns from mistake, is brave and is quick and willing to learn.

The assessor must be of someone who is confident of their assessment skills. Over the years, experience must in some ways contribute to the assessors feeling sure of their evaluation skills. With that said, it is undeniable that a few mistakes will be made along the process of evaluation. However, good assessors will take that as a learning point, improving themselves from the mistakes made, while working towards achieving the ideal image as efficient oral assessors. Not only that, assessors who are not afraid of making mistakes will become more resilient with time. Making the effort to acknowledge and learn from the mistakes made will contribute greatly in helping the assessors to learn faster. This will act as the perfect form of motivation in helping the assessors equip themselves with the right knowledge towards the right form of an accomplished assessor.

At the same time, assessors must possess the willingness and readiness to learn new things. This is because they can profoundly shape a student's educational experience. By gaining new knowledge about the world, the role of educators as assessors can further be polished and improved.

“The student oriented assessor”

This third identity construction is made up mostly of human values. It starts with the idea that assessors are those who are empathetic, logical, encouraging and lastly, sympathetic. Although they must be consistently strict and rigid during assessment practices, the values of sympathy and empathy must also be considered. However, this should only be done with caution, in the most logical state of the assessors.

Another aspect of this construction is that the assessors must be able to

encourage their students. By doing so, the students will be able to feel more relaxed, hence, resulting in a better and comfortable environment which could help in increasing the students' grades. At the same time, the assessors should also be cautious to not be overly encouraging, as this act can appear to be too pushy, hence inhibiting the students' train of thoughts, resulting in them not being able to do well in their said assessment.

“The innovative assessor”

This identity construction is made up of only two subject positions, which consists of the assessor as someone who is “strategic” and “creative”. Both these subject positions are classified together as they carry similar stances. As discussed earlier on, assessors who are strategic imply that they are creative as well. With resourceful minds, assessors can come up with different strategies pertaining to the assessment. This can be done for many terms, and will contribute to the effectiveness of the assessment itself, both for the assessors and the one assessed. Creativity, on the other hand, can help in making the session more interesting, as well as prompting students for better responses.

“The team oriented assessor”

Lastly, this identity construction positions the assessor as someone who is a “team player”. Being cooperation oriented in an organisation is essential, especially within this area of work. Without any teamwork, assessors will not be able to evaluate and expand their knowledge in the assessment world to fulfil their full potential. Teamwork is important as it gels this community of practice together, allowing for equal amount of respect and support. Hence, this will result in better communication forms between one another and a comfortable surrounding for everyone to work in. This

fundamental skill will also allow the educators to work towards the main common goal, allowing for the long term objective of the institution to be achieved.

Not only that, it will also help when the assessors have a positive outlook towards their job, making it easier for them to manage their tasks. This also enables a good relationship between the peers they work with, as well as with the students they assess. A build-up of quality working environment especially in teaching and assessing can be achieved with the right positive attitude.

Identity constructions are indeed “identities which exist explicitly in all education institutions” (Søreide, 2007, p.34) and based on five of the multiple assessor identity discussed in the section above, it shows that authentic acts of assessment practices bring about such identities. However, it is important to note that these identities are constantly evolving. The probability of them not existing years from now is possible, depending on what an “oral assessor” is defined as at that point in time. At the moment, it is safe to say that these five identity constructions are the building blocks to a good oral assessor for this community of practice serving in this institution.

4.4 How Subject Positions are used as Narrative Resources for Positioning

This section will attempt to answer the second research question posed in this study. As previously discussed in section 4.2, subject positions are positions in which an individual takes after. In this case, subject positions occur when all of the respondents describe their experiences and challenges as an assessor, positioning each self in a certain position, one in which they wish to be perceived as. In other words, this is an approach of how the subjects working in this field want people to view them as. The positioning of every individual is evaluated by the way they talk about the relevance of

the subject positions in question. It was found that there were various subject positions which these educators associate themselves to, and vice versa. For most times, an individual will generally associate themselves to the said subject positions. However, exceptions can be present.

There are two mechanisms associated under narrative positioning. The listed shows a definition of both these mechanisms taken from Søreide (2007, p. 534).

Positive positioning – When an individual acknowledges, identifies with and recognises the available subject positions to his or herself

Negative positioning – When an individual distances, opposes and/or rejects the available subject positions

This section will attempt to see if a majority of the respondents associate themselves or not to the proposed subject positions. The analysis will start with a list of positives, followed by the negatives.

4.4.1 Positive Positioning: Identification and Recognition

In this study, it was found that most of the subject positions proposed were positively associated with the teachers. This shows how the educators want the society to perceive them as oral assessors, as someone who has the defined qualities of an assessor. In most of the data, in general and as a whole, the educators associate themselves as someone who has experience, are knowledgeable and competence oriented in their field. Only five excerpts are chosen to explain how positive positioning

is portrayed in these assessors.

To start with, R1 states that as an assessor, the quality of not being biased is vital. Through this statement, she associates herself positively to the subject position of *“The assessor is fair and not biased”*. Similarly, R6 identifies herself as an assessor who is fair, stating that as an assessor, the act of short changing a student is not appropriate. This positive identification falls under the same category as R1, *“The assessor is fair and not biased”*. Here, fair and bias is categorised under the same subject position as both these words carry very similar meanings. R10, on the other hand, associates herself well to the subject position of an assessor who learns from mistakes. She mentioned in lines 50 to 52 about how it is important to acknowledge and learn from the mistakes made in order to improve. This can be seen from the extract below:

*“And also to be able to acknowledge that (.) you know, you have made mistakes, you have not made the accurate assessment, and **to learn from your mistakes**”* (Lines 50-52)

R13, in contrast, identifies herself positively with three subject positions. Not only is she brave, but she is ready and willing to learn. Her extracts are as shown below:

*“I am brave lah. **I take risks**, and I just go, even though when I don’t have the best answer, I would know how to (.) go around it...”* (Lines 214-216)

*“I’m **willing to learn**, do and learn kind of thing, you know...”* (Line 441)

“Readiness to learn::, being u- willing to expose myself...” (Line 436)

4.4.2 Negative Positioning: Opposition and Distancing

As previously mentioned, most of the educators associated themselves positively to their proposed subject positions. This was the expected outcome as one would normally indicate positive subject positions to themselves. However, there seem to be a few exceptions in which negative positioning was seen to occur. The extracts below show how the educators distant themselves by rejecting and not identifying themselves with the expected subject positions.

As previously identified, an assessor is expected to be strict during when an assessment is being conducted. However, as stated by R3 and R7, both of them rejected themselves from the perceived norm by saying that they “may be more lenient” in grading the assessed students.

R3: *“So sometimes, perhaps sometimes, at certain criteria **I may be more lenient**, because to give- to deduct marks totally::, when you’re unsure, sometimes it may not be fair to the students. So maybe some criteria I- I was a bit lenient as well.” (Lines 103-106)*

R7: *“I think sometimes **I will be more lenient** lo.” (Line 82)*

At times, situations like this may arise at certain occasions, and assessors may be put in a place where being lenient is necessary. This may be a difficult situation to be in, as assessing can be a very subjective matter. Although guidelines may be produced for reference purposes; it only however, serves as a guide. Assessors who have a reason to

be lenient usually can justify why this was inevitable in the process of assessing.

On the contrary from R3 and R7, R13 rejects the norm of “*The assessor is ready, willing and quick to learn*”. In this case, R13 revealed in the following extract that she is not an “assessment kind of person”, and does not “read up books on it”. She defies the norm of being an assessor who should be equipped with the knowledge from books, despite having undergone training in her earlier days. However, due to her extensive experience of more than 28 years, she has gathered her confidence through many of her hands-on assessment practices conducted.

An interesting observation has been made on R13. She has first distanced herself from being a confident assessor as shown in the quote below:

R13 – “*But as you go to secondary, you never ever get a ten pointer. There will always be 9.5. you know? the 0.5 must be minus off. And it has carried with me, you know. even in my job. My own- my own (.) now ah, I’m also doing it, like, ya, why can’t I give my 10, **why am I not confident enough** to give a 10 to my student.*”(Lines 59-63)

However, as the interview progressed, she then identifies herself in a later excerpt as an assessor who is more matured and confident. R13 was the only respondent who has explicitly mentioned and clearly portrayed such characteristics in her interview, going from negative to positive positioning. After years of practice, she has successfully managed to gain more confidence in assessing students, as evidenced in the following:

R13 – (after over the years) “*but now, that **I’m more matured**, and of course, going to retire, I’m thinking, ya, I’m **confident enough to give that student 10**, I can justify for it, because then I say ya, I would like to give her a 10, because she has shown she reached that level of the*

understanding of the task::, she was able to deliver::, she gave me what I wanted in the question, then ok, give her a 10.” (Lines 112-117)

Based on the above, it may be concluded that assessors’ identities are narratively constructed and understood in this community of practice through the process of positioning. By using positioning, we can identify and indicate the necessary elements used. Although the way these assessors position themselves may differ, it can be said that they all point towards the strong characteristics of a good oral assessor.

4.5 Summary

This chapter discusses and highlights the many different aspects of what it is like to be in this community of practice in this particular institution. Although the narratives are shared in a many different and unique ways, it can be observed that the educators who are assessors talk about similar standpoints. They are clear of their position, duty and responsibility as oral assessors, be it from someone who has just been in the field for a few years to those who have more than thirty over years of experience. They are also well aware of the major components that should make of a good oral assessor. A majority of this can be attributed to their vast experience as an educator, as well as to the many numerous times of doing assessment. Indeed, with time, experience can garner and polish crucial qualities essential to the growth of an educator.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was carried out to describe the identities portrayed by the educators as an individual and collectively as a group as well as to determine the positioning of the said items. It is in this study that the available subject positions were identified, together with the main classification of multiple assessor identities. At the same time, this study examined the use of positioning as a mechanism to determine whether the subject position is being accepted or rejected by the respondents. Studies on narratives, oral assessors' identities and positioning in the Malaysian context is still scarce especially on this group of people, i.e. educators as assessors. The current study was conducted to fill in this small gap in the research on the areas mentioned. To do this the study is guided by two research questions, and they are:

- 1) What are the identities portrayed by the educators as oral assessors?
 - as an individual
 - as a group
- 2) How are the assessors' identities narratively constructed and understood?

This chapter presents a summary of the methods used, the results found and the discussion of results in answering the research questions (sections 5.2 and 5.3). Based on the findings found in this study, some pedagogical implications are drawn, together with a discussion on the contributions and recommendations for future research in the same area.

5.2 Subject Positions and Multiple Assessor Identities

Analysis of the data obtained revealed that there were 20 subject positions located, and 13 of these came from the individual category, while the rest were from groups collectively. Some were found in accordance to the “FOCA’s English Language Proficiency Test for Pilots: Handbook for English Language Assessors”, while the rest emerged from the breakdown of the analysis from the interview transcripts. The emerging subject positions were extracted and labelled as part of an identity construction as it portrays the necessary qualities and characteristics in line with the composition of a good oral assessor. It was observed that out of the 20 subject positions located, 7 were found to be commonly shared among the educators, which makes this is accordance to what Holstein and Gubrium (2000, p. 117) referred to as a “shared stock of narrative resources”. It may therefore be concluded that most of the educators in this institution share many of the common elements needed when it comes to conducting an oral assessment.

Out of the 13 individual subject positions found, 3 were in accordance to the handbook, while another 10 were not evident in the referred material. As for the group category, 4 were found again with reference, and another 3 were without reference. In total, there were 13 new subject positions located which is in line with the identity of an oral assessor. These newly found positions reflect the characters and needs of a good oral assessor, providing a better understanding of the necessary elements of an educator when he or she switches into the role of assessing. At the same time, these subject positions reveal and portray how the 14 educators are as assessors, subtly showcasing their work ethics and how they manoeuvre themselves around during work, especially when an assessment is carried out.

Through these subject positions, it was also observed that many of the educators

share very similar experiences which are commonly experienced by this particular group of educators. Many may not be aware of the struggles they face as assessors, and this may serve as a platform to portray the issues faced. At the same time, this also shows how aware the educators are of the necessary characteristics and elements needed for a good assessor, even though many of them only learn to assess more professionally through the years of experience, and not from any formal trainings received. From this, it may be concluded that the educators in this institution are a group of professionals who are critical thinkers and dedicated to their job.

From the subject positions analysed, the five multiple assessor identities have emerged as part of the analysis to answer research question one. These identities bring together the subject positions found in a collective manner, summarising as a whole the elements encompassing a good assessor. From the categorised subject positions, a detailed definition of every identity was formulated. This allows an overview of each identity, which can serve as future reference for those who are new in this field. When the data was collected (via interview), the educators who participated in this study were not told what the data was for. They were interviewed based on the bigger project, which was looking at the moderation discourse of paired assessors for an oral interaction task. Hence, it may be concluded that the findings found here is authentic and does reflect the identities encompassing of all 14 educators in this institution.

5.3 Narrative Resources and Positioning

From the analysis, it is also observed that the educators used narrative resources by the mechanism of positioning, and this answers the second research question which is on how assessors' identities are being narratively constructed and understood. From the analysis, it was observed that a majority of the educators position themselves

positively to the said subject positions. A few selected individuals were however, seen to be portraying negative positioning at few instances.

Positioning brings about the stance of how an individual wants to be acknowledged or rejected with the said quality portrayed. This points to how they want to put themselves forward to an audience, which in this case are the interviewers themselves. Using positive or negative positioning in this context has given a particular impression about the educator as an oral assessor. This supports Mishler's (1999, p. 23) view of educators who use this mechanism, that is they "present themselves in a particular way and give a sensible account of their experiences". Each educator is aware that he or she is constructing and leading the story, and concurs with Holstein and Gubrium's (2000) portrayal of educators who are conscious of how they play vital roles in making the decision on the narratives and how they formulate them.

The main point of this mechanism is how the teachers use narrative resources to present themselves in a certain light. By using positive positioning, the educators want to portray themselves in a good stead. Negative positioning, on the other hand, does not necessarily mean that the assessor is not qualified enough to conduct the assessment. This just goes to show how difficult the process of assessing is with the existence of unexpected obstacles. Whether the narratives are deemed to be true or false, it is not of relevance in this context. From this study, it can be concluded that every individual will have the opportunity to position his or herself, given the availability of the different narrative resources available. Therefore, the ontological narratives and positioning mechanism provided in this study has provided us an insight into the various aspects of what it is like to be an oral assessor in this local institution of higher learning.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

This study has successfully identified the assessor identities present in this community of practice, both individually and collectively as a group. At the same time, it has also managed to determine the positioning of the narrative resources used by the educators when they are assessing. From the analysis, some implications may be inferred from a pedagogy perspective, on the educators and the institution itself.

Firstly, awareness of the existence of different identity constructions in this circle is essential. With the various qualities present, one can identify the strength of each person in the circle, especially when pairing sessions occur between oral assessors. By being able to identify the different strengths in each assessor, a well-balanced assessment can be carried out. This not only allows for an efficient assessment session, but also the chance for both the assessors to learn from one other. This will allow them to further improve their assessment skills, which will contribute to the effectiveness of the team itself.

Secondly, a proper guideline on the right method of assessing can be developed for the use of these assessors. A good guideline can have a positive impact on the quality of assessing, serving as the main reference point for all the current assessors in the institution during the course. A detailed and reliable guideline not only helps to ensure the efficiency of the assessment conducted, but at the same time helps to eliminate the possibility of assessing the students wrongly. As previously mentioned, this guideline can also serve as a platform showcasing some of the most common challenges an assessor faces during assessment. This in turn may lead to having the right solutions. Furthermore, a detailed scoring guide should also be developed for the benefit of all as there were a few complaints about how the current scoring guides used were incomplete and difficult to follow.

On a macro level, the institution itself can play a role in helping to improve the experiences of assessing. Appropriate trainings provided prior to assessment tasks could have been put in place. Some of these include providing beginners or amateurs in assessment a course to introduce the mechanics of scoring oral exams. The institution too could take the initiative to improve some of the facilities, so as to allow the assessors to record and manage the assessment session in a more conducive manner. There have been instances where the examinations were too noisy and assessors were not able to hear the students' speech. This indirectly affects their assessment practice.

5.5 Contributions of this Study

As a whole, this study has filled a gap of the lack of studies in the areas of narrative, identity, positioning and assessors' identities combined. An insight of the less explored aspect of educator identity has been achieved, perhaps opening doors to some possible future researches. This current study has yielded some interesting insights in the understanding of the identities and positioning of educators as oral assessors. Moreover, a better understanding of the needs and requirement of being an assessor has also been provided and could be shared with other institutions as well. Further improvements on policies as well as those pertaining to the personal growth of the educators and future assessors can also be encouraged. At the same time, the theoretical development has also been well expanded in this area, exploring in depth the linkage between these four areas. By using Søreide's (2006) theoretical framework, this study has successfully managed to explore the narrative resources available and this has led to the results as explained and described in chapter four.

5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

It would be beneficial if more attention and focus is given to assessment practices and understanding what assessors actually do when they are scoring candidates. Future studies can be done by broadening the scope, such as examining roles and identities for different kinds of assessments and for the various language skills. On another level, apart from taking into account historical elements, both national and global educational policies can also be considered as these may provide a deeper insight of resources into how identity constructions of assessors may be developed. This will provide better future assessors not only on a national scale, but also worldwide. By penetrating deeper into this, a better education system may be developed to enhance the quality of the education world since it is strongly believed that education is the main resolution to the many national glitches and challenges. It would be interesting to take into account meta-narratives of parenthood and economy to see how these affect public narratives about teaching and assessing.

5.7 Conclusion

The findings in this study has helped shed some light on the identities and positioning of assessors. The identities located are those which have broken away from the perceived and normalised stereotype of what an assessor should be. It showcases the many different spheres available to each educator as an evaluator. However it is noted that this is a small scale study and its findings cannot be generalised about all educators in local public institutions. Nonetheless it does provide, to some extent, detailed evidence about the varieties of identities evident within an oral assessor in this institution. The theoretical framework has also allowed the expansion and exploration of new and sensible methods in the process of understanding these assessor's identities collectively. Additionally, the analysis of discourse and narratives available within this

study has given access to the many necessary insights needed to explore the complex mind of an educator when placed in the role of an oral assessor. This, in summary, has given the necessary parties the chance to reflect and work on the needed elements.

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